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PEAK COUNTRY

JOSEPH E. MORRIS



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HADDON HALL AND THE RIVER WYE

Beautiful Britain

The Peak Country

By
Joseph E. Morris



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THE PEAK COUNTRY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

DRIVEN in like a wedge between two great industrial districts that are everywhere noisy with the din of machinery, grimy with coal-dust, or soiled with smoke, is that beautiful strip of pastoral or mountainous country that is commonly called the "Peak of Derby." On the east it is jostled closely by the great Yorkshire and Derbyshire coalfield, with Sheffield for its huge and gloomy capital; on the west it is encroached on by the cotton-mills of Manchester, the silk factories of Macclesfield, and the potteries of Stoke. Here on either side we have masses of dense population, skies perpetually stained with smoke, and fields whose trampled emerald, maimed hedges, and joyless timber, merely parody, with "pale reflex," "Arcadia's golden creed." All in between is a rolling green dairy land, enshrining in its hollows and beneath its white limestone cliffs a succession of grey and

retired hamlets, by the side of pure and crystalline streams, and sometimes swelling up into purple ridges of gritstone moor, whose silence is seldom broken except by the sudden sharp cry of the grouse, or by the tinkle of half-seen streams. One would have looked to find that these happy valleys of Rasselas—these vales, as Mr. Ruskin said of them, where one would expect to meet Apollo and the Muses—would have been guarded by these busy northern peoples as a sacred playground not less zealously than America has guarded her Yosemite Valley. Instead, we have two railways—from Derby to Manchester and from Manchester to Sheffield—driven right through their very heart; we have hideous quarries and uglier lime-works; and, lastly, we have whole stretches of delicious strath converted into angular tanks. “I assure you,” said Byron in one of his letters, “there are things in Derbyshire as noble as in Greece or Switzerland.” That, no doubt, was always hyperbole, and would need to be qualified still further to-day. But, in spite of modern recklessness, the Peak country still remains one of the most romantic and beautiful in England. It exhibits a delicate flavour of its own, varied, but possessed of essential unity, that marks it off strongly from all other districts that claim recognition for their beauty in England and Wales.

What exactly are the limits of the country thus

denoted is matter of no precise definition. The term "Peak" itself is at least pre-Conquest, since the Saxon colonists who settled here were styled "Pecsæte," or settlers in the Peak. The castle built by William Peveril at Castleton in 1068 is described as "the Castle of the Peak" (*Castrum de Pecke*). But what precisely were the limits of this district is not exactly known. Camden seems to have considered it the west part of the county—"on the other side the Derwent, which is nothing but hills and mountains." But this is to exclude—what ought clearly to be included—the moorland edges that lie above Ashopton and Curbar, and the much quarried dome of Crich Stand. The original Ordnance surveyors of 1840, desiderating, apparently, that the Peak should be a mountain, but failing anywhere to find a mountain of the name, invented in despair a nomenclature of their own, and boldly wrote the title across the plateau of the Kinderscout. This, of course, was absurdly to limit a district, which, whatever be its boundaries, is certainly much wider than this. The only official Peak, in fact, is apparently the two Hundreds of the High and Low Peak, the latter of which is sometimes called the "Hundred of Wirksworth." The physical Peak district, however, overflows these two Hundreds into the neighbouring Derbyshire Hundred of Scarsdale; it even overflows into the neighbouring counties of Staffordshire, York,

and Cheshire. On the whole it seems best, as the lawyers say, to make our own dictionary, and to comprehend in the "Peak" the whole of the hill country that forms the southern termination of the Pennine Chain. Thus understood it is easy to define it, at any rate on three sides, if not towards the north. Eastward and westward it comes only to an end where the hills of limestone, or millstone grit, subside beneath the later strata of the Derby or North Staffordshire coalfield. Southward it dies away almost imperceptibly into the great central plain of England. Only towards the north, where its hills are uninterruptedly continuous with the hills of Yorkshire, Durham, and Northumberland, is it necessary to put an artificial bourne. Such a bourne, I think, is put naturally enough at the point where the Great Central Railway traverses the moorland on its passage between Penistone and Dinting Station. I am tempted, indeed, to include yet one more stretch of Yorkshire and Cheshire that embraces the fissured peat-hags of Featherbed Moss and Black Hill. Beyond that, from Holmfirth northwards, the mills begin in force; there is still much beautiful scenery, but the type and conditions are changed.



ODIN MINE AND MAM TOR, CASTLETON

CHAPTER II

KINDERSCOUT AND THE NORTHERN MOORS

THE wildest scenery in Derbyshire—the only scenery in the county, in fact, that can definitely claim to be called mountainous—lies in the extreme north-west corner of the shire, where Derbyshire, Yorkshire, and Cheshire meet in a tangle of desolate moor. Singularly enough, till the piercing through it some dozen years ago or more of the Dore and Chinley Railway, this tract of country was hardly known to those who had Matlock and Buxton by heart; and even now there are recesses towards the head of the Derwent, and of its tributaries, the Westend and the Ashop, which are seldom trodden save by the foot of the shepherd or sportsman, and are still as guiltless of road or footpath as a Ross or Inverness glen. Probably few human eyes have ever gazed on the innocent first prattlings of the Derwent, though Manchester and Sheffield, with their teeming populations, are not twenty miles distant in a bee-line. This region is sacred to the grouse; and, unhappily, the fear of invasion by countless hoards of Easter or Whitsun-

tide mill-hands has rendered its owners less generous to the public—one cannot altogether blame them—than the owners of other moorlands more remote.

To climb to the top of the Kinderscout is almost as desperate a feat as to penetrate Mecca in Holy Week. Everywhere the climber is warned off by notice-boards, or his footsteps are dogged by the gamekeeper. Yet Kinderscout is not only the culminating point of Derbyshire, but in some respects is unique among English hilltops. Mr. Jennings, who found Dovedale a suspicion overrated, can evidently never weary of praising its impracticable peat-hags. “There was, indeed, a somewhat forbidding aspect over this dark, weird, apparently impenetrable fastness, this

‘Wild abyss,

The womb of Nature, and perhaps her grave.’

Yet it also had a strange fascination with it, and it was only when the light began to close in, casting blacker shadows than before over this domain of ‘chaos and old night,’ that I reluctantly began to retrace my steps along the brook which comes down little platforms in miniature cascades.” Defoe in his “Tour,” though he does not seem to have penetrated it, styles this country “perhaps the most desolate, wild, and abandoned in all England.” Though it is forbidden to traverse the actual top of the Kinder-



IN EDALE

scout, it is possible to perambulate its huge, sullen slopes in the course of a tolerably long day's walk. Hayfield, on its west side, is a possible starting-point, as is also the Snake Inn on the solitary high road (save for the ubiquitous motor-car and the tramp) between Manchester and Sheffield. The writer once stayed at the last a week, and a lonelier or more characteristic moorland fastness it would not be easy to imagine. The house gets its name from the crest of the Cavendish family: a snake nowed—that is, “tied in a knot.” From the Snake to Hayfield there is a track by Turners' Fold (so called because the shepherds used to meet here to return and recover strayed sheep) that runs very closely under the finest escarpment of the Scout, and commands from its highest point a comprehensive view of the wildest assemblage of hilltops in Derbyshire. Hayfield itself need be skirted only (unless the new reservoir for Stockport has obliterated old footpaths), and presently the track begins to mount again past a rough little upland farm, with a picturesque old sundial by the side of the lane. On the left are the great millstone grit bluffs of the Kinderscout itself, scantily clothed with coarse herbage or heather. The gritty rock has the black and sombre look and the grass the dark hue that are everywhere indicative of this particular geological formation, and invariably invest it with an air of chastened gloom. It was scenery like this,

among the not far distant hills of Haworth, that inspired the stern genius that gave us "Wuthering Heights." One is glad even in brilliant sunshine to descend into cheerful Edale, which has lost its former solitude, but hardly at all its charm, since its invasion by the unnecessary and far from harmless railway. Edale, however, though praised by many, to the writer's way of thinking, is a trifle commonplace; certainly it has none of the subtle magic of the narrow dale of the Ashop on the farther side of the great hill. To this we shall journey presently; but for the moment it is better, being in Edale, to cross the chain that bounds it on the south to visit Castleton, with its Norman castle and weirdly mysterious caverns. This chain of hill itself, though its highest point—Mam Tor—is only 1,709 feet high, exhibits some of the best-cut summits in the Peak, with the possible exception of Bunster and Thorpe Cloud in Dovedale. It is very narrow and very short, stretching only for the distance of two miles, or so, from Mam Tor itself to Lose Hill; but, thanks to its razor-like ridge, the walk along it offers more sense of real hill-scrambling than any other range in the county. Doubtless Dympus, or South Head—the Ordnance maps seem to leave its proper name in doubt—has also something pyramidal and sculpturesque in form as seen from Edale Cross, especially when its outline is picked out with flecks of snow,

but it is really a more clumsily built hill. The direct footpath from Lady Booth, in Edale, to Castleton traverses the ridge immediately to the west of Back Tor, a precipitous cliff of naked black shale, with a growth of native scrub about its base. It is better, however, when once on the top, to follow the saddle to Mam Tor, whose bulky green summit is crowned by the remnants of a Celtic hill-fort, a great part of whose *vallum* has slid down the face of the hill. This, indeed—the "Shivering Mountain"—like the Wastwater Scree, is veritably a mountain in decay. It has never fallen, like Mount Rossberg, in a single voluminous landslip, overwhelming villages and choking half a lake, but, gradually disintegrating on its northern face, it crumbles away in flaky ruin on to the accumulating rubbish-heaps below. A parallel phenomenon may perhaps be observed in the Cleveland Hills, to the south of Stokesley; whilst, if in search of a Derbyshire analogy to the Rossberg cataclysm, we may find it in prehistoric history among the hills on the east of the Alport, or, almost the other day, in the limestone mass of Crich Stand. Inevitably Mam Tor is one of the Seven Wonders of the Peak, and is celebrated as such in Hobbes of Malmsbury's ponderous "De Mirabilibus Pecci." Hobbes, of course, was a Wiltshire man, and Oxford by education; but, as tutor to the Cavendish family, he lived in Derbyshire many years, and his

portrait is still preserved at Hardwick Hall. Immediately to the west of the summit of Mam Tor, and a bare trifle below it, the climber may drop on to the cart-road from Castleton to Barber Booth, descending which a brisk walk of half an hour will bring him pleasantly to the former village.

The writer was hugely relieved to find, when he revisited Castleton fairly recently, after an interval of many years, that, unlike some places lower down the valley, such as Hathersage and Grindleford Bridge, it had not been destroyed by the invasion of the railway. Luckily, the station is two miles away at Hope, and Hope itself is half an hour from Sheffield. On the particular occasion, it is true, the place was full of noisy and fatuous trippers, but these inflict no permanent harm, like the builders of fatuous villas, who have the secret of inflicting the maximum of wrong on their neighbours with the minimum of good on themselves. Castleton remains, as the writer first remembers it in the quiet peace of an Easter evening, a typical limestone village—a cluster of clean white houses, with a clear and lively brook, watched on every side, except the east, by a ring of emerald hills, just touched with mountain sternness, that stand around its calm rusticity as the hills stand round Jerusalem. This is one of those homely English hamlets that gratify the eye—when the trippers have



THE LION ROCK IN THE WINNATS, BETWEEN CASTLETON
AND CHAPEL-EN-LE-FRITH

gone—with a curious sense of quiet satisfaction. It has not quite the charm of Ashford-in-the-Water, but it has flavour and association all its own. It is a centre, too, from which to visit all that is most wonderful—if not all that is most beautiful and romantic—in the Peak. Eldon Hole lies only about two and a half miles away in a bee-line across the high limestone pastures to the south-west. Once reputed bottomless, it is slightly dismissed by Rhodes as “merely a deep yawning chasm, entirely devoid of any pleasing appendages, and altogether uninteresting.” This, indeed, is the heyday of prosaic common-sense; and probably, in sober fact, the cavity is really far less striking than Alum Pot or Yordas Cave, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, or scores of Craven subterraneous marvels. To the writer, however, who has never visited it, but will certainly neglect no lucky chance, it teems, and must always teem, with adventitious interest. Did it not retain its mystery as one of the Seven Wonders till only one hundred and thirty to one hundred and fifty years ago—it seems almost the other day—when it was first descended by a Mr. Lloyd? Did not Cotton find it fathomless? (unless iambic verses lie):

“For I, myself, with half the Peak surrounded,
Eight hundred, four score, and four yards have sounded;
And though of these four score returned back wet,
The plummet drew and found no bottom yet.”

Something was evidently wrong with the line, for on a second attempt the lead stuck half-way. And, lastly, did not the great Earl of Leicester, the villain of Scott's "Kenilworth," bribe a poor man to accomplish its descent as early as the reign of Elizabeth? "He was let down two hundred ells," apparently without touching bottom; but when he was hauled up again, "with great expectation of some discoveries," he was found to be senseless, "and died within eight days of a phrenzy."

But it is not needful to travel so far as Eldon Hole to explore nearer and less fantastic marvels. Follow up the crystal brook that makes perpetual music to the village, and you come shortly to the wonderful Peak Cavern, which ranks with Ingleborough Cave, and, I suppose, with some of those at Cheddar, as the finest and most imposing underground grot in England. Again the writer has not been inside, but he has stood in silent admiration at the mouth of its gaping portal, which would suit ideally for the cave of Giant Pope, or of Giant Despair, or of any other of the fabled caves of fiction. Certainly no other cave mouth with which he is acquainted can compare for a moment with this. Compared with the Peak Cavern, the entrance to the great Trou de Han, in the Ardennes, is a low-browed doorway, and the entrance to Ingleborough Cave a mere creeping hole. Moreover, this vast cavity, from which flows the



PEAK CAVERN AND PEAK CASTLE

noisy stream, is placed at the immediate foot of a splendid crag of towering white limestone, which, if less lofty and impressive than that which keeps guard over Petrarch's Fountain of Vaucluse, is singularly overwhelming and majestic ; whilst the tall, mysterious posts of the rope-spinners, who have used this gloomy corridor time out of mind as a rope-walk, retiring one behind the other till they fade into the darkness, are suggestive of some dim approach to gnome-land. On the top of this huge crag, commanding the whole head of the green dale, are the exiguous remains of early Norman curtain that William of Peveril probably reared on this eagles' eyrie at a date soon after the Conquest. The existing rectangular keep is, of course, much later, having been in building, as we learn from the Pipe Rolls, as late as 1177. This is one of the smaller of the fifty or so odd keeps of this kind in the country ; whereas the only other example of its sort in Derbyshire, of which nothing but the excavated foundations now remain at Duffield, was certainly one of the biggest. Clitheroe, in Lancashire, is the smallest of them all. Lovers of Scott will not need to be reminded that the scene of his well-known novel is not laid at Castleton ; "Peveril of the Peak" has much to do with the Isle of Man, but nothing at all with Peak Castle.

Looking west from the outskirts of the village, it

will be noticed that the valley head is closed—as it were by a “cirque”—by a wall of steep green hill, but that this is torn by a deep rift, like the Cheddar gorge on a minor scale, the farther end of which is concealed by a bend in the gorge. This is the celebrated Winnats, or Windgates, through which mounts steeply, between stacks and spires of fantastic rock, the old neglected road to Chapel-en-le-Frith. The centre of the cleft is impressive, especially in the twilight, when both ends are sealed from view. Those who stay at Castleton will find it to their advantage to pursue their way beyond this singular pass to visit Chapel itself. The country round it is wild; it has still a market-cross; and the church (much “churchwardenized”) is at least remarkable for its dedication to the “holy, blissful martyr” of Canterbury, and for the loathsome cruelty that was practised here on the Scottish prisoners defeated at Preston in 1648, actually fifteen hundred of whom were confined in the cramped space of the old church. No marvel that the register records the burial of forty-four before they were released, and of more who were interred two days afterwards. Returning to Castleton, we have yet to visit more subterranean marvels. The Odin Mine is interesting—like Thor’s Cave, above the Manifold—for its pagan name, though it would not be safe to infer much from it. The Speedwell Mine, on the contrary, is remarkable for bursting into one of the

strangest underground gulfs in the country, the height of which has never been probed. "Two gentlemen," says Rhodes, "who lately visited this place took in with them some powerful rockets, which they threw up in the midst of the cavern. They rose to their highest elevation, exploded, and spread out their brilliant scintillations as uninterruptedly as if they had ascended under the canopy of heaven." The hill above is not particularly lofty, so that the roof of the cavity must be a mere crust. This cave was only discovered towards the end of the eighteenth century, so that this greatest of all Derbyshire wonders does not count in the mystic Seven.

Retracing our steps over the hill to Edale, we return from this long digression to our abandoned perambulation of the Kinderscout. A little below Lady Booth a cart-track on the left strikes up the flank of the hill past an upland farm. This soon becomes a path, which, surmounting the breast of the hill, drops down steeply into the hollow of a lonely glen that penetrates deeply into the mass of the mountain under the edge known as "Mad Woman's Stones." The slopes are clothed with bracken and dotted with old thorns, and the seclusion at the bottom is complete. The upland pastures must now again be climbed till we reach the narrow *col* that at this point connects the Kinderscout with Win Hill, and to some degree deprives it of complete insularity.

Over this neck comes the old Roman road that ran between Manchester (*Mancunium*) and Brough. Farther on, beyond the Snake Inn, where it goes by the name of Doctor's Gate, it is possible, by prodding with a stick, still to locate the paving of this ancient highway where it has sunk below the level of the wet and peaty moor. The view from this lofty spot may well have won the admiration even of men whom one imagines so sternly unromantic as the foreign legionaries who must once have come tramping across this pass. Southward it extends, beyond the rich vale of Hope, to the distant moors towards Tideswell and Abney; whilst northward and north-westward the peeps into the Ashop Valley are absolutely without parallel in their character in England, and in loveliness only to be matched in the richest dales in Cumberland or Westmorland. Perhaps I may be forgiven for repeating here what I have previously said with reference to this neighbourhood elsewhere, though there is reason to hope that the fate then threatened has been at any rate postponed, if not averted: "One is sorry to remember that part of these dales—surely as peaceful, as retired, and as beautiful as ever was the 'Happy Valley' of Rasselas!—is some day to be converted into ugly, stiff reservoirs to supply water to Sheffield, Nottingham, and Leicester. No one denies the right of these cities to

this primary necessity of life ; but it may fairly be questioned whether it was not possible to obtain their supplies from other sources than this—to refrain from thus violating this exquisite ‘ playground ’ so close to the smoke of so many great cities.”

CHAPTER III

DERWENT AND WYE

THE Derwent, as stated in the previous chapter, rises in the lap of desolation, though it is necessary only to cross a narrow intervening strip of elevated moor to hit the railway and great high road that run between Penistone and Manchester. Probably all that most people know of this stern district is learnt from one of these last two routes, the wild gritstone edges that hang above the long series of reservoirs in Longden Dale being familiar to anyone who looks out to the south of the railway train on emerging from the great Woodhead Tunnel. Those with more adventure, who quit the line at Woodhead Station and climb the high road eastward, just at the point where the railway is luckily forced to burrow, will observe almost at once, on their right, a noble and characteristic cluster of the singularly rugged cloughs that are significant of all this wildest part of Derbyshire. A noble walk might be taken—though involving heinous trespass—up any of these three Black Cloughs, and so across Bleaklow Stones (2,060 feet), the second highest point in the county, to the summit of the pass

between the Snake Inn and Glossop ; or by quitting the Penistone road farther on, and striking boldly to the south, the springs of Derwent might easily be hit within a little over a mile of quitting the highway. It would be easy, however, on a misty day, or without previous experience of this kind of country, to lose oneself as helplessly as Browning's “Childe Roland” ; nor might it be less difficult to find one's way back to the road that had only been quitted a few seconds previously :

“ Grey plain all round :

Nothing but plain to the horizon's bound.

I might go on ; naught else remained to do.”

It is altogether a safer plan, as well as more legitimate, to follow the lawful track, from Penistone through Langsett, that descends to the Derwent at Slippery Stones. This is to miss only the first three miles or so of the infant stream, and to be compensated for our sacrifice by the sudden apparition of certainly the wildest prospect in the Midlands. The path comes over Featherbed Moss—a curious name that occurs again among similar wild hills to the south-east of Saddleworth—and the higher part of the way lies through a kind of trough, that is really the sandy bed of a stream channelled through spongy peat-hag. Emerging from this we have suddenly in front a prospect of extreme desolation : far as the eye can see—and it ranges far and wide—is nothing but

curlew-haunted moor in a long succession of ridges. When the brook is hit at the bottom it has just to be followed down, past the huge new reservoirs for the supply of Nottingham and Leicester, till the main road is gained at Ashopton. A couple of miles or so short of this point the lane, now restored to civilized scenery, passes Derwent Hall, with its picturesque gables—a charming old house of the Duke of Norfolk's. The stream is here crossed by an ancient pack-horse bridge of two arches, which retains, on the centre of its parapet, the base of its medieval cross. This is said to have been a constant feature of old bridges; and the socket stone may still be seen at Warkworth, whilst possibly at Ulshaw Bridge, in Yorkshire, its site is marked by a sundial—a fate that has befallen many an old cross in churchyards. There is still a cross—perhaps modern—in the centre of the stately bridge of many arches that crosses the Seine at Vernon, in Normandy—a town of peculiar interest to the lover of Derbyshire, as having given name to a great Derbyshire family.

At Ashopton the Derwent is joined by the Ashop, which descends from its own gracious dale; and from this point forward to the Trent the united streams form a noble river, conspicuous by its beauty and volume. Unhappily, its immediate course, past Brampton, Hathersage, and Grindleford Bridge, including between the last two places what were once



EDENSOR CHURCH

perhaps its very loveliest reaches, has now been hopelessly suburbanized, and so lost to all the world, in order that a handful of Sheffield people may sleep in what was once country. We will not, then, visit Hathersage, though the grave of Little John still remains in its churchyard, placed high on the hillside above the village :

"Where Little John, the master's mighty man,
There in his giant bones at Hathersage,
Sleeps on till doom among the Derby hills"—

and though his bow was once suspended in its church. Nor will we hunt for the ruined chapel of Padley—as the writer once hunted for it, years before the railway came, in vain—though it was from the old Hall (of which the chapel formed part) that the wretched fugitives, Nicholas Garlic and Robert Ludlam, were dragged from concealment on Candlemas Day, 1588, to be first imprisoned at Derby, and subsequently to be hanged, drawn, and quartered in that town for the single, but then all sufficient, crime of being Romanist priests. It is better now to approach the great Derbyshire shrine of Eyam, not directly from Grindleford Bridge, but circuitously, from Castleton or Hope, by way of Abney. So is it, perhaps, still possible to pay pilgrimage to this place of mournful memories with mind properly attuned to the genius of the spot. Eyam is a limestone village, with a church of average interest, and with a pre-

Conquest cross of more than average interest preserved in its churchyard. Hundreds of other villages in this so-called Pennine Chain can show as brave a face as this, or boast antiquities equally valid. None, however, can unfold a tale so piteous, or point to graves so pathetic as those in the neighbouring fields. The plague arrived here in a box of clothes that was sent to the village tailor from London in 1666, and five-sixths of the total population is said to have died in the next few months. The devoted rector, William Mompesson, laboured on heroically among his dwindling flock; the church was closed, but the village met for worship in the open air, in the glen still called "Cucklet Church." The field known as Riley Graves is the burial-place of a family of seven Hancocks, who followed one another to this last resting-place in a week. "Scarcely a field in the vicinity of Eyam," says Dr. Cox, "is without its graves."

From Eyam it is easily possible to drop down to Middleton Dale, which, truth to tell, was never a great thing to boast of—like the much over-vaunted Valley of Rocks at Linton—and is now much injured by quarries and lime-burning. One side of the glen, no doubt, is skirted by noble limestone crags; but Derbyshire has many a scene to match it. Stoney Middleton, on the contrary, at the lower end of the glen, like its own strange, octagonal, post-medieval church, is unique, and therefore not to be matched



CHATSWORTH PARK AND THE RIVER DERWENT

Ed. A. M. L. L. L. L.

at all. The village, as its name betrays, is stony enough; white, little houses—or blackened with age—piled in indescribable confusion on the slopes above the brook as martins' nests are plastered to a wall. Perhaps one is reminded—if the comparison be not fanciful—of the strangely clustered hill villages of the Eastern Pyrenees; but the writer has not seen it for many years, and possibly his recollection is treacherous. Shortly below this we regain the Derwent at Calver, whence a short walk will presently bring us to Baslow and the northern gates of Chatsworth Park.

Chatsworth Park, in Derbyshire, and Chillingham Park, in Northumberland, are probably the two most beautiful in England. From the model village of Edensor, on the western confines of the former, in whose quiet precincts are now buried the Dukes of Devonshire, there is a public road that crosses the park within full sight of the house, and brings one through Beeley to Rowsley. As to how far this vast pile of Palladian masonry is in place in this quiet English valley each individual visitor must be left to decide for himself. "The whole character of the building," says Dr. Cox justly, "with its adjuncts, gardens, and grounds, is essentially formal, square, and artificial; and when looking at Kipps's engraving of the old house at Chatsworth (begun to be pulled down in 1687), we cannot but feel how far more

suited to the place were its turrets and rounded outlines." This, he admits, for a Derbyshire man, is almost to utter heresy ; and certainly even trim formality in landscape gardening may sometimes be justified if only for the sake of contrast, as we see, for example, in the noble pleasure-grounds of Studley Royal, in Yorkshire, whose pseudo-classical temples, smooth-shaven lawns, and stiffly regular pools, afford so delightful a prelude to the splendours of Fountains Abbey. Certainly, the family of Cavendish is lucky in possessing so many favoured dwelling-places of such lavishly different beauty. If Chatsworth be formal, nothing can be more lovely and less artificial than the woods along the Wharfe at Bolton Priory. The present great house was in building (with the exception of the much later north wing) between 1687 and 1704, and is due to the fourth Earl of Devonshire. A prior house was finished by that famous Bess of Hardwick whose passion for bricks and mortar is said to have been due to the prediction of an astrologer that her death would not occur so long as she kept on building. It was she also who erected the splendid Elizabethan mansion of Hardwick Hall, as well as completing one at Worksop, and beginning another at Owlcotes ; and the gossips did not fail to notice that when she died in 1607, at the age of eighty-seven, the masons were then stopped by hard frost. Bess, who left behind her no very

enviable character—she has been called (I do not know with what justice) “the oppressor of her husband, the tyrant of his family, the aggrandizer of her own”—was buried at All Saints, Derby, in a tomb of her own erection. Whatever else be thought of her, she certainly had character—like the famous Lady Anne Clifford, who could talk of all things learnedly, “from predestination to slea-silk.”

Those who quarrel with Chatsworth because of its classical ponderosity will probably be gratified in crossing the hill and visiting Haddon Hall. This is to pass from the spirit of the Renaissance to the spirit of pure medievalism. It matters not in the least that the old romance of the elopement of Dorothy Vernon and her Manners lover has gone the way of so many other similar traditions—that the young scion of the house of Rutland was so good a match for Dorothy that need for elopement can hardly have existed, unless, indeed, Dorothy Vernon was as brain-sick as Lydia Languish. Haddon Hall, in fact, is romance itself, embodied in stone and mortar. Few other ancient manor-houses in the kingdom—and Haddon Hall, it must always be remembered, though it grew from the fortified nucleus of what in Northumberland is often loosely styled a “pele tower,” was always rather a manor-house for residence than a castle for aggression or defence—few similar manor-houses in the kingdom, it may fearlessly be asserted

are at once so interesting, so extensive, and so completely in repair, or situated so superbly, as this. In Derbyshire itself there is Wingfield Manor; but Wingfield is a later building, and in ruin. There is Bolsover Castle, on a prouder hill; but Bolsover, though it looks across miles of Scarsdale, looks down also on reeking collieries. At Haddon the quiet beauty of the valley is complete, for even the Midland Railway—that great destroyer of English landscape—has here been luckily forced to hide itself in what engineers, I believe, call “cut and cover.” The building itself has been often described, and I do not propose to describe it further. Few spots in the county are better known by photographs and pictures.

At Haddon, be it noted, we are no longer in the valley of the Derwent, which was quitted when we crossed the hill from Chatsworth. The stream that winds through the green meadows at the foot of Haddon Hall, and is there crossed by a picturesque old bridge, is the sparkling Wye, which descends from its strange well in Poole’s Cavern, near Buxton, through a series of delicious limestone ravines as far as Bakewell. For the last four miles or so, however, of its course, between Bakewell and Rowsley (where it joins the Derwent), it flows through landscape of entirely different character, meandering through level, lush-green pastures—and no stream in England is more Meander-like in character than this short section



IN MONSAL DALE

of the Derbyshire Wye—in a hundred wanton and serpentine wanderings in the heart of an open vale. Every inch of this stream, from its confluence to its source—hardly twenty miles, if we do not count its windings—should be explored minutely, for every inch of it is lovely. It matters little, or not at all, in what direction we trace it, whether upwards towards Buxton, or downwards towards Rowsley. Three miles or so above Haddon is the charming market-town of Bakewell, pleasantly placed on the slope of the gentle hill immediately to the south of the stream. This is one of those very few towns in England—Morpeth is another, and on a big scale York—that actually look best as approached from their railway-station. The writer will not easily forget his first entrance into Bakewell on a pleasant Easter evening, crossing the romantic old bridge above the clear and brimming Wye, and entering the market-place, with its old gabled houses placed in such happy juxtaposition with the stately Rutland Arms. High above all is the singularly picturesque spire of the parish church, which, though wholly rebuilt in mid-Victorian restoration, apparently preserves its old lines, whilst behind are wooded green hills. Of late this view has suffered, like most similar views in England, by the stupid interspersions of glaring red roofs among groupings of sober grey masonry. Bakewell, no doubt, has changed, but it has not altogether for-

feited its charm; it still ranks with Ashbourne, Melbourne, or Repton, and not with industrial Chesterfield. On the staircase of the Rutland Arms (it is just worth mentioning) is a set of T. Smith's prints of Derbyshire scenery published in 1743. Possibly their artistic merit is small, but at least they serve to show that the county had already acquired a reputation of some sort before Chantrey came hither to sketch, or Rhodes to write his "Peak Scenery."

Above Bakewell the vale of the Wye begins to narrow, and immediately above Ashford-in-the-Water contracts to a narrow glen. Ashford itself, at the point of transition, to the writer's way of thinking, is the pleasantest village in Derbyshire; its subtle charm is beyond analysis—a thing rather to be felt than explained. Like all other places in the county, it is liable at seasons to inroads of noisy trippers; but those who choose their time, or are lucky in their chance, will visit the place with pleasure and quit it with regret. To linger on its bridge by moonlight, as the writer has lingered, when the first pink sprouts of the butter-bur, in a world that is otherwise flowerless, are burgeoning on patches of gravel by the side of the musical stream; to descend into its shelter in the twilight of a mild spring evening, as the writer has descended, after tramping far and wide over bare limestone hills; to start from it in the dewy freshness of the morning, as the writer



MILLER'S DALE, NEAR LITTON MILLS

again has started, with leagues of green country in front for midday travelling and with Dovedale for evening goal—these are phases of Ashford that linger in the memory when the *char-à-banc* is forgotten and the tripper is at rest. The church has apparently been over-restored, and the writer has not been inside. He cannot, therefore, say whether it still retains the old “virgins’ crowns” that used to hang from its roof—strange erections of paper on a wooden frame, for all the world like little beehives, that used formerly to be carried before a maiden’s bier, and afterwards hung up in the church. This custom, once prevalent over much of England—these crowns may be seen as far apart as St. Albans, in Hertfordshire, and Alne, in Yorkshire—is said to have lingered longer in Derbyshire than in other parts of the kingdom. It seems to be alluded to by Shakespeare when writing of the funeral of Ophelia :

“Yet here she is allow’d her virgin crants,
Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home
Of bell and burial.”

Five of these “virgins’ garlands” hang, or used to hang, in Ashford Church ; and there was another, according to Dr. Cox, at North Wingfield. At St. Mary’s, Beverley, there is one that was carried before Elizabeth Ellinor, who died in 1680, at the age of twenty-one.

At Ashford, we have said, the vale of the Wye

contracts, and henceforth, to the source of the stream at Buxton, it is merely a narrow glen, now opening out a trifle, as at Monsal Dale, where the river is embowered among steep green hills ; now closing again, as at Litton and Chee Dale, to the dimensions of a mere ravine between perpendicular walls of limestone rock. Those who know the marvellous gorge of the Tarn, in South France, will be reminded of these cañons of the Wye, though the Derbyshire scenery, of course, is of more minute scale, though hardly of more delicate detail. If possible, not a single inch of these delicious glens should be missed between Ashford-in-the-Water and Buxton, though those in a hurry may be forgiven for cutting off "a monstrous cantle" at the very commencement by taking the direct lane across the meadows to Edge Stone Head. Moreover, this introduces them to a dramatically sudden view of Monsal Dale that is missed by the more legitimate approach by the river bank, though the writer cannot but regret that the old country inn that used to stand at the top of the brow commanding the view has yielded place to a brand new tourist hotel. Monsal Dale itself, though traversed by the railway—and it was the intrusion of this last into these sacred valleys that justly aroused the Olympian anger of Ruskin—is still of a sweetly Arcadian simplicity, the prelude to more majestic things to come. At Litton the valley

is only slightly disfigured by old-fashioned mills that scarcely disturb its serenity. The quarries and lime-works of Miller's Dale, with their smoke and din, are far more annoying features. It is not always remembered by those who unthinkingly justify the creation of railways through beautiful country that the mere presence of the line itself, hideous and irreparable as are too often the scars that it inflicts on the unfortunate scenery, is frequently the least of its evils; that the presence of a railway is a point of contagion,

“As killing as the canker to the rose,”

whence death and disaster of every description spread year after year over the face of the landscape. Signs are not wanting that sanity in this matter is tardily asserting its supremacy, and that the “monied worldlings” who put utility above beauty, and the means of living above life, are no longer to be allowed speciously to conceal poor logic and bad sentiment under the garb of self-styled common sense. At Miller's Dale the exact river should be quitted for a short distance, to visit the large village of Tideswell, the magnificent church of which—the Cathedral of the Peak—enshrines what is probably the finest brass in Derbyshire. This commemorates Richard Pursglove, who was not only the last Prior of the great Augustinian house of Guisborough and the seventh and last Provost of the College of Rother-

ham, but was also consecrated Protestant Suffragan Bishop of Hull under Edward VI., and lived to become "a vehement Papist under Mary," and a member of the Commission whose appointment in 1557 was probably only a prelude to the establishment of the Inquisition in England—one of those lucky few, in short, who knew how to ride their barque through the perilous waters of the Reformation, so as to bring home merchandise in safety from both the Old World and the New. Pursglove, however, must have had a conscience—unlike, perhaps, the later Vicar of Bray—for he finally refused the oath of supremacy to Elizabeth, and was stripped of all his preferments.

From Tideswell the visitor should return to the river, and pursue it in the direction of Buxton. The quarries soon disappear; the railway is driven to tunnel; the glen contracts to a gorge; a fountain bubbles up through mossy fragments of fallen rock, glad to emerge into the pleasant sunlight after its long subterranean course from the wolds above; and presently, at an apposite bend of the glen, we enter the sober splendours of Chee Dale. Nothing in the writer's persistent judgment is so wholly grand in all Derbyshire as Chee Tor. The right-hand bank of the river is noble, with its concave curve of ivy-festooned cliff; but the glory of the place is the opposite shore, where the magnificent crag rises sheer

from the brisk and pellucid brook in a glorious convex surface of gleaming white limestone to a height of nearly 300 feet, blackened here and there with wet patches of moss, crowned at the summit by a fringe of dark wood, and possibly relieved by a cluster of pale harebells that have fixed their slender roots in some cranny of the rock. Nothing in Dovedale is so superbly majestic, so “simplex munditiis,” as this. Here, in this narrow glen, is complete seclusion, for there is no manner of road save a rough, stony foot-path, and the railway is hidden in the hill; here are waters of crystalline clearness, purer than those of the “fons Bandusia”; here is a great cliff that expresses (what Dr. Johnson says with less reason of Durham Cathedral) “rocky solidity and indeterminate duration.” Nothing in Derbyshire—unless, possibly, the mouth of the Peak Cavern—and only three or four scenes of the sort in Yorkshire, are to be compared for a moment with Chee Tor.

For the remaining few miles of the journey to Buxton, past Ashwood Dale and the Lover’s Leap, the river retains much of the same general character, though never again on so splendid a scale, and though the seclusion is now interrupted by the presence of both railway and road. Buxton is now a large modern watering-place, placed higher above the sea (a rough 1,000 feet) than any other town of similar size in the kingdom, and surrounded in every direc-

tion by a wilderness of rolling green hills. At no other large watering-place in England is the visitor brought so immediately into contact with scenery so wild. Of watering-place attraction it has, of course, its proper share, and the archæologist will find an old market-cross in the Upper Town. But, apart from these, there is not much to be seen, though the Crescent (erected by the then Duke of Devonshire in 1780-4) is a stately example of Palladian architecture, not altogether unworthy to rank with the more or less contemporary terraces at Bath. Excursions, of course, may be made in a hundred directions—to Poole's Hole, a fine cavern in the immediate vicinity; to the summit of Axe Edge (if the summit be thought worth climbing); to the famous Cat and Fiddle on the Macclesfield road, which is really (now that the old inn has been closed at Tan Hill, in Yorkshire) the highest public-house in England; to Goyt's Mill, and the pretty glen scenery between there and Whaley Bridge; to Chee Tor, Haddon Hall, Chatsworth, and Dovedale; and even, by a press, to the distant wonders of Castleton and to the rugged seclusion of Kinderscout itself.

Poole's Hole is apparently the source of the Wye, which begins its romantic career in most unromantic fashion by tripping over artificial cascades in the trim pleasure gardens of Buxton. It is best now to retrace our steps down this famous stream—and no

one need regret a second visit to Chee Tor, and Monsal Dale, and Ashford-in-the-Water — to its confluence with the Derwent below Rowsley, its own waters being swollen just before it loses its identity by the clear, united trout-streams of the Lathkill and the Bradford. These are lively brooks, threading pleasant pastoral dales, and guarded at frequent intervals by bits of limestone cliff, though it seems to the writer absurd to compare any part of the Lathkill (as is done in a well-known handbook: I have only an old edition) with the better parts of the Dove. The meadows here in places are gay with *Geranium pratense*, and damp, shady spots with the gorgeous northern *Campanula latifolia*, whose flowers are said to assume in Derbyshire a lighter shade of lilac than farther north. These valleys may be conveniently explored in the course of a long day's walk from Rowsley, or Bakewell, to Matlock, by way of Youlgrave, Winster, and Bonsall — a roundabout route that is in every way preferable to the main high road between Rowsley and Matlock, through Darley Dale, the latter valley being now, to the writer's way of thinking, far too full of cottages and quarries, and with a railway that is far too much in evidence. Youlgrave is a typical, old-fashioned Derbyshire village, with a stately church tower not unworthy to rank even with that at Tideswell. The font (which comes, however, from one of its old chapel-

ries) is remarkable for its curious projecting bracket—not, as occurs so constantly in Brittany, an auxiliary bowl to receive the waste water from baptism by affusion, but probably, as Dr. Cox thinks, a kind of pedestal for holding some former kind of font-cover.

From Youlgrave we return to Alport, at the junction of the Lathkill and the Bradford, and follow thence the old lane that mounts the upland pastures in the direction of the large village of Elton, short of which, however, we take the foot-path on the left that strikes across the meadows to the two strange gritstone crags that are sometimes known as “Robin Hood’s Stride,” sometimes as “Mock Beggars’ Hall.” The latter name, at any rate, is really appropriate, for, seen from a distance, they have curiously the appearance of a ruined hall or castle—more so, at any rate, than the famous Castle Rock, in the vale of St. John, that mocked the vision of Sir Roland de Vaux. Closely adjoining these, to the north, is the splendid gritstone face of Cratcliff Tor, for the Peak is hardly less distinguished for its piles of fantastic millstone grit than for its stately limestone cliffs, such as Beeston or Chee Tor. At the foot of this is one of those strange hermitages—in this case with a crucifix sculptured in the rock—that remain here, as again at Dale Abbey (and, outside Derbyshire, at Warkworth,



CHEE TOR, CHEE DALE, NEAR BUXTON

Knareborough, and Guy's Cliff), to testify to a phase of religious emotion now utterly dead in England. I do not remember to have seen foxgloves growing in more stately profusion than among these rocks, and some at Leith Hill, in Surrey. From Cratcliff Tor we soon rejoin the dusty high road that sweeps up the hill towards Winster, once a little upland mining town, but now shrunk to the importance of a village, though still exhibiting a picturesque, disused, small, red-brick market-house, that has now become the property of the beneficent National Trust. From the brow of the hill above Winster is a huge sweeping view across the vale of the Derwent that is bounded only by the line of purple moor that lies between that valley and Chesterfield. A rough, narrow lane, between loose stone walls, will be found to lead us from this place to the retired hamlet of Bonsall, whence a path may be found across the flank of Masson direct into Matlock Bath. Bonsall, when approached from the present side, is certainly a rather striking village, the view of its old cross, of the many gabled sixteenth-century King's Head, and of the church, with the two curious crowns round its spire, being strangely characteristic and quaint. Approached in the other direction, by the lane from the foot of the Via Gellia, it is less attractive, the effect, indeed, being distinctly untidy, if not even squalid.

Matlock, or rather the three Matlocks—for Matlock Bath is entirely distinct from Matlock Bridge or Matlock Bank—is the second of the two great Derbyshire spas, but wholly different in character from its sister, Buxton. Here the scenery is far less wild, but perhaps, on the whole, more varied in character. Matlock Bath, at any rate, is uniquely placed in the hollow of the narrow limestone glen of the Derwent. The crag scenery here is exceedingly fine, though it lacks, of course, the seclusion and rusticity that lend such grace to Chee Tor or Dove-dale. The High Tor, in particular, which towers above the stream from a pediment of wood to a height of nearly four hundred feet, is a feature of inconceivable majesty. On the other side of the gorge are the Heights of Abraham, of smooth, rounded outline, but beautifully wooded. The place is famous for its so-called “caverns,” most of which are really deserted lead-mines. There is, however, a natural grot at the foot of the High Tor, by the side of the river. Those who like to spend their day or afternoon in wandering in lonely country, but prefer to return at night to civilization, will find this centre agreeable enough for the exploration of lower Peakland. Excursions innumerable may easily be contrived to all the famous beauty-spots of Derbyshire. Matlock, moreover, is the key to one or two sites that may fairly be claimed as its peculiar posses-



HIGH TOR, ON THE DERWENT, MATLOCK

sion. One of these is Crich, a village on a hill, with a restored market-cross, commanding vast views in almost every direction—vaster if we climb to the summit of Crich Stand, or, at any rate, to the summit of what quarries and landslips have spared of it. The church was once the site of two chantries, respectively of Our Lady and of St. Nicholas and St. Catherine; and a very interesting and quite unique chartulary in connection with these institutions is preserved in the British Museum. Another excursion may be made to Lea Hurst, for many years the home of Florence Nightingale; another to Dethick, with its memories of the Babingtons; and another to the pleasant village of Ashover, the church of which possesses a lead font.

But the one excursion from Matlock above all others—save those that it shares with Bakewell or Ashbourne—is to the splendid ruins of Wingfield Manor, on the hill above the Amber. We are here on the edge of the colliery district, but the country is still triumphant over the town. The great manor-house here was commenced by Ralph, Lord Cromwell, who was also the builder of Tattershall Castle, in Lincolnshire, at some date that cannot be fixed with precision between 1441 and 1455. It has been well described as “probably the most striking example of a later English manor-house, with certain defensive features”—as “a definite compromise between war and peace.” Haddon Hall, on the contrary, as Mr.

Hamilton Thompson insists, unlike Wingfield, "is a growth of from four to five centuries, and from an early date showed a tendency to rid itself of its military character." Both are singularly instructive and beautiful buildings; but whilst Haddon is still luckily perfect, Wingfield is now largely roofless ruin. Possibly Wingfield, when both were complete, was the more sumptuous and grander dwelling of the two.

CHAPTER IV

DOVEDALE

AXE EDGE, like Plynllymmon, in South Wales, or Cross Fell, in Cumberland, is the happy nursing-ground of many rivers ; and if the four proud streams that descend from it—the Dove, the Wye, the Dane, and the Goyt—have neither the majesty of the Severn nor the general loveliness of the Tees, yet the first of them, at least, has achieved for three short miles of its course a reputation almost unrivalled in England. “The River Dove,” says Rhodes, speaking of this section, “is one of the most beautiful streams that ever gave charm to a landscape ;” whilst Dr. Cox, after being at pains to repudiate all such foolish and fanciful epithets as “terrific,” “majestic,” and “awesome,” is yet constrained to pronounce “that there is no other mountain-stream or small river in England that possesses so many attractions of its own, or passes through such lovely scenery, as does the Dove in the stretch between Hartington and Thorpe.” Axe Edge itself, to tell simple truth, is hardly worthy of such glorious parentage. Though attaining nearly 1,800 feet—only about ten hills in Derbyshire are bigger—the writer can hardly remember a duller or

more insignificant mountain as seen from the neighbourhood of Chelmorton (he has to confess that he has never trod its summit). Southward from its source, for the next nine or ten miles, the Dove separates Derbyshire from Stafford, and few, perhaps, save anglers, ever pace its upper waters, till it reaches the old mining village of Hartington. To anglers, indeed, like the Coquet in Northumberland, the Dove is peculiarly sacred ; and to its associations with Charles Cotton—whose name is duly kept in memory by the principal inn in Hartington—and in a lesser degree with Isaac Walton (though the latter is linked more closely with the Hertfordshire Lea), it owes a second, if more mundane, crown of glory.

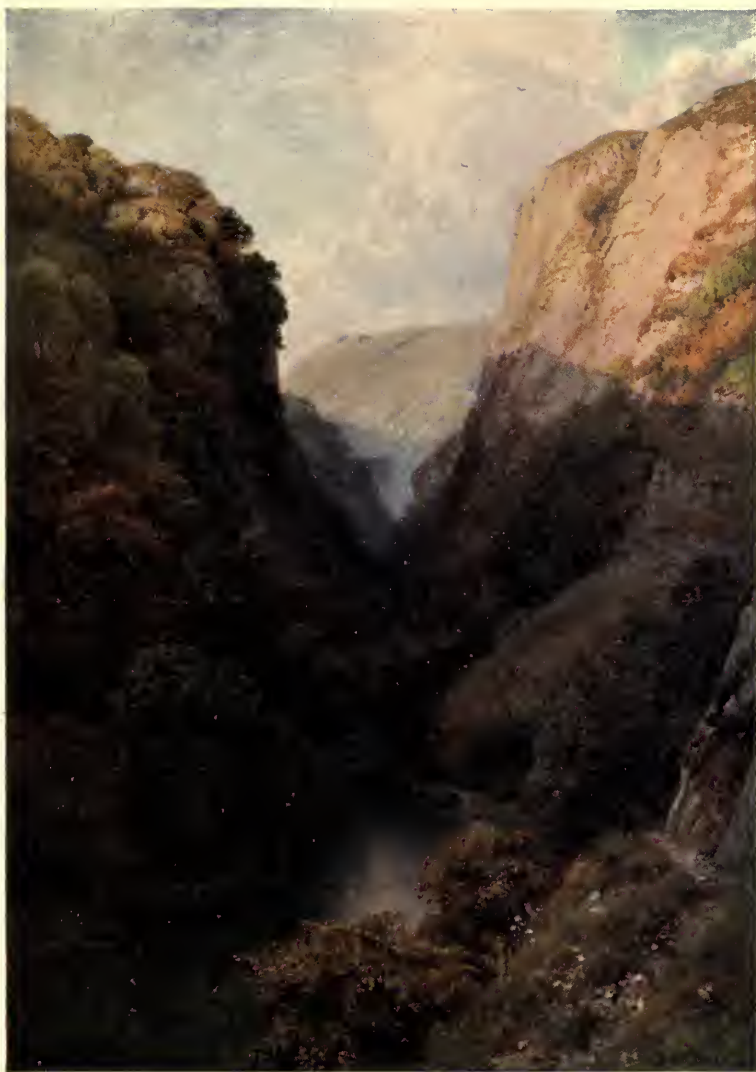
Hartington itself, though no longer so remote from civilization as when the writer first remembers it, now more than twenty years ago, remains a good example of the grey, old-fashioned, stone-built villages that are everywhere scattered over the rolling green pastures of the limestone region of the west of Derbyshire. This pastoral country is unique in England, at any rate on so large a scale, and retaining so persistent and uniform a character for such great distances. In other limestone districts the sweet green meadows soon rise to loftier heights, where presently the grass is replaced by rough bents or rougher heather, or where vegetation vanishes altogether, as it vanishes on the top of Black Hill,

on the Yorkshire and Cheshire border, in acres of black, soppy peat-hag. But in this unrivalled country, where Stafford and Derbyshire march, the limestone does not yield place to the coarse millstone grit, nor the short crisp turf—as delicious to walk on as the softest of carpets—to hummocks of tufted cotton-grass and other herbage of coarser texture. The country for miles is a huge, rolling dairy-farm, intersected by endless stone walls, and dotted only at sparse intervals with clumps of plantation that serve rather to mark the prevailing desolation than relieve the abounding monotony. Monotony, indeed, on a sunless day is the vice of this vast panorama; but monotony—and, after all, is not the sea itself in a sense monotonous?—vanishes at a touch when the sun bursts out and irradiates this dazzling succession of wavelike hills with sparkling and emerald glory. I hardly know anywhere another mountain country that depends so wholly for its effect on strong sunlight, or that suffers so total and disastrous an eclipse in heat haze or cloudy weather. Nor has rain among these hills those gorgeous compensations that redeem it, or render it actually welcome, on the Coolins, or on the Carnarvonshire mountains. There it means rags of broken mist, that are swirled in confusion round sable crags, or swollen streams of voluminous water descending grandly in cataract after cataract to the sea, or plain. There it means actual accentuation of

features that in sunlight are pleasing, but less conspicuous. Here it means the utter blotting out of feature of every kind, and the reduction of everything to a drizzling uniformity.

Yet, after all, this prairie country, seductive though it be to the few, is only the setting to those gems of lovely limestone scenery that lie along the course of its too infrequent rivers—the Manifold, the Wye, and, above all, the Dove. The many who find the walk from Ashford-in-the-Water to Hartington tedious, yet vie with the rest in praise of Dovedale, though they prize it rather like the “precious jewel” that the toad is said to wear in its head. The archæologist, at any rate, will not despise that walk, for it introduces him to Arbor Low, the finest megalithic monument in Derbyshire. It lies between the stony little village of Monyash and the great white high road from Buxton to Ashbourne, but considerably nearer the former. Every stone in the great circle has fallen—supposing them once to have been upright—but this adds, perhaps, to the sense of mystery the sense of immense antiquity and pathos. Here, perhaps, we may realize something of the feeling that came to Wordsworth when first he saw “Long Meg and her Daughters”:

“A weight of awe, not easy to be borne,
Fell suddenly upon my spirit—cast
From the dread bosom of the unknown past,
When first I saw that family forlorn.”



IN DOVEDALE



We have not here, indeed, the variety and apparently endless succession that belong to the stones at Carnac; but certainly at Carnac there is no such lovely inland view as we command from the hilltop at Arbor Low. To the archæologist, too, the churches at both Monyash and Hartington—like most churches in Derbyshire—present more than one feature of interest. Derbyshire, in fact, over more than half its area, will prove to the ecclesiologist a really happy hunting-ground, where he can combine—as he cannot do in Cumberland, or the Highlands, or North Wales—scenery that, at any rate, approximates to mountainous with architecture that at least is of more than average merit. Derbyshire hills were just not too wild to exclude altogether medieval civilization. The pedestrian, too, whether archæologist or not, who crosses the green tableland between the Wye and the Dove, should not fail to turn aside—if it lie outside his direct track—to visit the old Newhaven Inn that lies by the side of the Buxton road, where the branch strikes east for Bakewell. Gaunt and huge for this unpeopled desert, it bears melancholy witness, with its long line of deserted stabling, to the decay of the ancient glories of the road—glories that are reviving, if reviving at all, in quite a different guise with the coming of the motor-car. Let him notice, too, in a hundred upland fields, the small round ponds that are features of the country, fed,

one imagines, like the "dew-ponds" of the southern downs, only by the mists and rain of heaven.

But we have lingered too long with objects by the way when our faces should be set towards Dovedale. That valley proper does not begin till five miles lower down the stream, at the hamlet of Mill Dale ; and those who are impatient of all except the best may drop directly on to its head from Alsop-en-le-Dale Station (if they come from Buxton), or from the Thor's Cave Station (if they come from the Staffordshire side) of the little narrow-gauge railway. In the latter case there is a hilly walk of about four miles. But the cream of any scenery should always be approached through gradations of steadily increasing loveliness ; and wisdom and leisure will certainly not miss an inch of the riverside walk between Beresford Dale and Thorpe Stepping Stones. From Hartington a path across the fields brings us in a mile or so to the entrance to the former, where the open basin of the Dove is suddenly contracted to a narrow glen between limestone cliffs that barely yield passage to the footpath and the river. Everything here is on a miniature scale, and, if indisputably lovely, is, equally beyond dispute, more than a little artificial and well-groomed. It forms, in short, a dell in the pleasure-grounds of a mansion that has long since vanished, but that lives in literary history as the home of Charles Cotton and the visiting-place of Isaac Walton.

Cotton himself has sung the wonders of the Peak—seven in number, like those of Wales—in verses that lack the quaint latinity of Hobbes' "*De Mirabilibus Pecci*," and has linked his name inseparably with that of "gentle Isaac"—though Byron wished to string the latter on a hook, like one of his own trout—by adding the practical second part to Walton's famous prose eclogue.

In the middle of Beresford Dale a great jagged tooth of limestone, like a prehistoric menhir, juts up suddenly in Pike Pool in the centre of the stream. Lest we should seem to have depreciated Beresford Dale unduly, let us give the testimony of the late Mr. L. J. Jennings, who styles it, in his pleasant "*Rambles among the Hills*," "more sylvan in character than Dove Dale proper, and upon the whole better worth visiting." Few will agree with this verdict. Beresford Dale, however, possesses—what Dovedale does not—a tangible relic of the classic fishing partnership in the form of "a little square cottage by the riverside, half hidden by trees, with the date of 1674 over the door. This was the fishing-house built by Charles Cotton, where he entertained his dear companion, and the dear companion of us all—Isaac Walton."

Beresford Dale comes and goes—it is only a few hundred yards at most in length—and beyond this delicious preface to Dovedale the glen opens ou

again in level pastures to the west, though it presently contracts at the entrance of the long green gorge, which, for the next four miles, secludes the brimming river, till human habitation is met with again at Load Mill. The visitor by this will probably have learnt that "dale" in Derbyshire has a widely different denotation from what it has in Cumberland or Yorkshire. There it is generally applied to the whole length of a river valley, from the source of the stream to the point where the hills subside into the level of the plain, or where the tributary valley, if such it be, is merged in a parent dale. Here it is given to short successive sections of a narrow limestone ravine. It is not, perhaps, always easy to say, as we perambulate the stream, where one dale is left and another entered. Part of our present valley is Wolfscotedale, and Mill Dale commences somewhere lower down ; but probably it would puzzle a native to put his finger on the exact line of demarcation between the two. Wolfscotedale, at any rate, is quietly beautiful, though in a minor key. There is little wood and not much crag, but everywhere the footpath and stream are closely hemmed in by immensely steep slopes of emerald green ; and everywhere the stream itself, which is held up at frequent intervals, to accommodate the angler, by artificial weirs, formed by little heaps of stones, is full of delightfully brimming pools, where a thousand green water-weeds wave in the

crystal stream, such as perhaps are only to be found where water flows over limestone or chalk. Beresford Dale is left behind, and superlative Dovedale lies in front, so that this is an interval of happy interlude :

“The quiet mood
Of contemplation slipping in between
The beauty coming and the beauty gone.”

At Mill Dale it is worth while quitting the river and clambering steeply out of the glen, on the Staffordshire side, to the little upland village of Alstonefield, in the church of which (though apparently not in its proper position) may still be seen the charming old Jacobean pew that is said to have witnessed the Sunday devotions of Cotton and Isaac Walton. The church itself has some good work of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and a really grand collection of seventeenth-century pewing, including a magnificent contemporary pulpit and reading-desk that is dated 1637. In each of the two nave porches is a carved pre-Conquest stone. The return to Mill Dale may be shortened by a path across the fields that is far too steep to tempt us to quit the lane on the ascent. At Mill Dale the Dove is spanned by a picturesque little bridge, immediately beyond which we turn through a wicket on our right, and soon enter the glories of Dovedale. It is difficult to know how to speak of these famous three miles in language that is neither extravagant

nor flat. Except at the lower end, where Thorpe Cloud and Bunster, though really ridiculously low—one just falls short of a thousand feet, and the other just exceeds it—are singularly fine summits of their sort, the valley has absolutely nothing to show that indulgence can term a mountain ; it is simply a long, straight gash in the huge green tableland, whose monotony is not even varied (till again quite at the end) even by the introduction of a curve. But this gash, from beginning to end and from top to bottom, is filled with such abundance of beautiful detail as not to leave a single dull spot ; everywhere the steep slopes are broken by fantastic spires of crag wreathed with masses of ivy, or clad in bare places with sheets of yellow stonecrop, or scattered with wildering forests of native growth, of sycamore, oak, and ash. Sometimes the glen expands a little, and shows us high up the huge yawning cavities of two cavern mouths, either of them big enough for the fabled cave of Cacus ; sometimes it contracts till there is barely room for the stony footpath between the brimming brook and the tall white cliff. Here the path threads the exact level of the river, which is so clear that it is possible to detect every pebble at the bottom, and watch the motion of every streamer of water-weed that tosses and strains in the lively current. There it mounts steeply to the crest of a knoll that enables us to look up and down the whole short length of the

glen, though never beyond its lips to the tableland that surrounds it. Certainly Dovedale, without exception, is the most delicate, precious, fairy-like piece of loveliness that not merely Derbyshire, but England, has to show. It has absolutely nothing either mountainous, or solemn, or grand. Chee Tor, to the writer's fancy—not to travel outside Derbyshire—is a far more impressive piece of rock scenery, and more in what Matthew Arnold might call "the grand style." Dovedale is merely dainty and surpassingly exquisite. Its position to other glens is akin to the position of the "Midsummer Night's Dream" to the other comedies of Shakespeare.

At Thorpe Stepping Stones, towards the end of the dale, a group of saddled donkeys serves rudely to remind us that the rail is not half a mile away, and that trippers from Manchester are not altogether unknown. But by going at the right season, or, even during the wrong season, by going early or late in the day, it is possible (and the writer has had the luck to do it more than once) to traverse Dovedale from end to end without encountering a single soul. From the Stepping Stones it is easy to scramble up either Bunster or Thorpe Cloud, which guard the happy twist that secludes the dale from the outer world. Each for its height is a respectable hill, and not without some crag on its top, but Bunster commands the better view of the glen. Emerging from this verit-

able gate of the hills, the whole nature of the valley is changed. Dovedale comes abruptly to an end; and henceforward the course of the river—though beautiful to the end, and far richer in objects of artificial interest—lies through a more ordinary vale.

Almost immediately on quitting the gorge the Dove receives the Manifold from the west. Rising near Axe Edge, this most erratic of streams might almost be turned into the Dove in the neighbourhood of Hartington, so low at that point is the watershed between them. Lower down, however, the river-bed plunges into a deep romantic glen, whilst the river itself, save when heavily in spate, plunges into the bowels of the earth. The valley, of course, is no rival for Dovedale, but isolated bits of rock scenery are surpassingly grand. Such is Thor's Cave, which pierces deep into the summit of a lofty crag that towers high above the waterless ravine. Such is Beeston Tor, which almost threatens to overwhelm (were its limestone not so massive) the little white farmhouse that nestles below it, at the spot where the dry bed of the Manifold is joined by the dry bed of the Hamps. In all this part of the valley there is no kind of road, and not even a proper footpath. I have tried scrambling along the parched bed of the stream, but the going is far from easy. It is noticeable, however, that this is a real mountain river-bed, where the stream—when there happens to be

one—flows in lively current over a bed of broken rocks, in strong contrast to the Dove, a great part of whose course is more like a Hampshire trout-stream. Somewhere in the grounds of Ilam Hall the Manifold emerges from the depths. Ilam itself is a model village, with a flagrant imitation of an Eleanor cross. Not one in fifty, I suppose, of those who admire its trim cottages ever mount the steep road to discover for themselves the quaint little church of Blore Ray that lies hidden in a folding of the hill. Yet it exhibits in the Basset tomb a magnificent Renaissance monument that would not be insignificant even in Westminster Abbey; whilst a window in the chancel enshrines a charming fragment of fifteenth-century glass, the subject of which is St. Anne teaching the Virgin to read. All this, of course, is in Staffordshire; but a visit must also be made before quitting the neighbourhood of Dovedale to another famous pilgrimage shrine, in Derbyshire. This is the village of Tissington, long famous for its connection with the principal Derbyshire branch of the Fitzherbert family, whose noble tombs may be seen in Norbury Church, and who suffered many things gladly for the ancient faith as Papist recusants in the reign of Elizabeth. “It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the shameful and shameless treatment of the Derbyshire Fitzherberts who adhered to the unreformed faith throughout the reign of Elizabeth. Sir Thomas

Fitzherbert . . . was imprisoned for thirty years, with only three brief intervals of freedom. He was dragged from gaol to gaol, now in the Fleet, now in the noisome county prison of Derby, now at Lambeth, and now at the Tower, in which last State prison he died in 1591, aged seventy-four." Tissington, however, is probably best known for its celebrated "well-dressing," which perhaps had its origin in immemorial pagan custom, but is now of distinctly Christian character. "On Holy Thursday," says Dr. Cox, "the wells of the village are all decorated with much elaboration and care. Flowers, berries, lichens, or mosses, are affixed to frames filled with a layer of clay, so as to produce in mosaic work mottoes, intricate borders, and designs, and even attempts at pictures. . . . This old-established village festivity, when every house and cottage entertain their friends, retains its essentially religious character. After service in the church a procession is formed and each well visited in turn, when the collects for the day are said, appropriate psalms chanted, hymns sung, and a Gospel read." "Tap-dressings," to use an unromantic name, are still observed, the writer believes, at Buxton and Wirksworth, but he does not know that these have the continuity of the more celebrated ceremony at Tissington. This and the Grasmere "rush-bearing" are among the last and most pleasing survivals of

those innocent village festivals that once enlivened rural England, and served to mark the progress of the seasons :

“The spirit of Laud is pleased in Heaven’s pure clime,
And Hooker’s voice the spectacle approves.”

The wells are five in number, and not all are equally picturesque ; but the Coffin Well, at the back of a cottage garden, should be visited, though perhaps a little difficult to find. Tissington itself is a charming village, and, even if it be not Holy Thursday, the traveller need not regret turning out of the way to wander among its trees and old grey cottages.

Ashbourne is the rustic capital of all this pleasant tract of green country—a quiet old town, mostly of red-brick houses, with the sign of the “ Green Man ” swinging across its silent street. Dr. Johnson and Boswell stayed here for a season in 1777. Approach it from what direction we will, the roads that lead to Ashbourne are everywhere beautiful, whether we come through the wild country from Wirksworth, Winster, or Cheadle, or up the charming open vale of the lower Dove from Uttoxeter (which old-fashioned people still rightly call “ Uxeter ”), or across country from the direction of Repton and Etwall, past hedgerows that are stately with foxglove and sweet with honeysuckle. Ashbourne, moreover, possesses quite the finest church in Derbyshire, with

a spire that, if less eccentric than that of Chesterfield, is at least more dignified, and with a transept almost uniquely divided by a line of central arcade. It has other curiosities — some thirteenth-century glass, and an inscription that records its consecration in 1241 by Hugo de Patishul, Bishop of Coventry, in honour of St. Oswald, King and Martyr. Inscriptions of this kind are rare in England ; and nowhere have we an example so quaint as one at Argentan, in Normandy, which, after recording the erection of a fifteenth-century pillar by Jean Lemoine, naïvely concludes with a prayer for forgiveness :

“ Par Jean Lemoine bon maçon
Ce pilier icy construit.
Dieu pardonne la mal façon.”

There is also in the north transept a wonderful collection of table-tombs, with recumbent effigies of the old local families of Bradburne and Cockayne. But pre-eminent even among these attractions is the simple figure of Penelope Boothby, who died in 1791, just before she was six years old—a little girl stretched on a mattress in an attitude of weariness or pain. Not less pathetic than the child herself are the heartbroken words of the inscription : “ The unfortunate Parents ventured their all on this frail Bark, And the wreck was total.” The sculpture is by Banks ; and it is said that Chantrey came here to study it before executing his own, perhaps better

known, group of the Sleeping Children in Lichfield Cathedral. It has well been said of the artist, with reference to this masterpiece: "Vivos duxit de marmore vultus."

Ashbourne is not strictly in the valley of the Dove, but of a tributary stream that descends from the neighbourhood of Wirksworth. Generally it is treated as the last outlier of the Peak in this direction, and few perhaps descend the parent river below it. This is a mistake, for every remaining inch of the Dove, till its junction with "the smug and silver Trent" in the rich level pastures within sight of Repton spire, is crowded with sites of historic interest or rich in natural beauty. There is Norbury, for example, with its grand collection of fourteenth-century glass and its stately tombs of Fitzherbert. There is Ellastone, almost opposite, which is the "Hayslope" of "Adam Bede," and was the birth-place of George Eliot's father; and Wootton—

"Wootton under Weever,
Where God comes never"—

at whose park that strange self-torturer, Jean Jacques Rousseau—

"toujours persécuté
Ou par lui-même ou par l'envie"—

and Thérèse le Vasseur were fellow-guests in 1766.
"The villagers long remembered his strange appear-

ance, as he searched the park wall for mosses, or pryed in some lonely nook for plants, clad in a long gown and belt, on his head a black velvet cap with gold tassels. The local opinions of him varied; some held that he was an exiled king, and some that he was a necromancer with spirits at his command." Here, too, is Wootton Lodge, one of the stateliest Elizabethan manor-houses in England, and not far away the considerable remains of the Cistercian house of Croxden. All these last are in Staffordshire, as also is Rochester, with its singularly perfect churchyard cross, and Uttoxeter, where Dr. Johnson performed his strange hour of penance in the market-place. In Staffordshire, too, is Tutbury, with its tantalizing fragment of castle, and still more tantalizing fragments of ancient priory church. But Derbyshire, at any rate, may lay claim to Repton, with its still existing pre-Conquest crypt and its relics of an Augustinian priory, which keeps watch and ward, within sight of the smoky chimneys of Burton, over the last reaches of the Dove ere it flashes into the Trent. Here was the site of the Mercian bishopric, before Coventry or Lichfield was dreamt of. But this is to trespass too boldly beyond self-imposed limits, and to desert the strict boundaries of Peakland proper.

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